The

B. G. T.

PATRIKA

Bhagawan Shri Gopi Nathji Trust,

SRINAGAR, KASHMIR.

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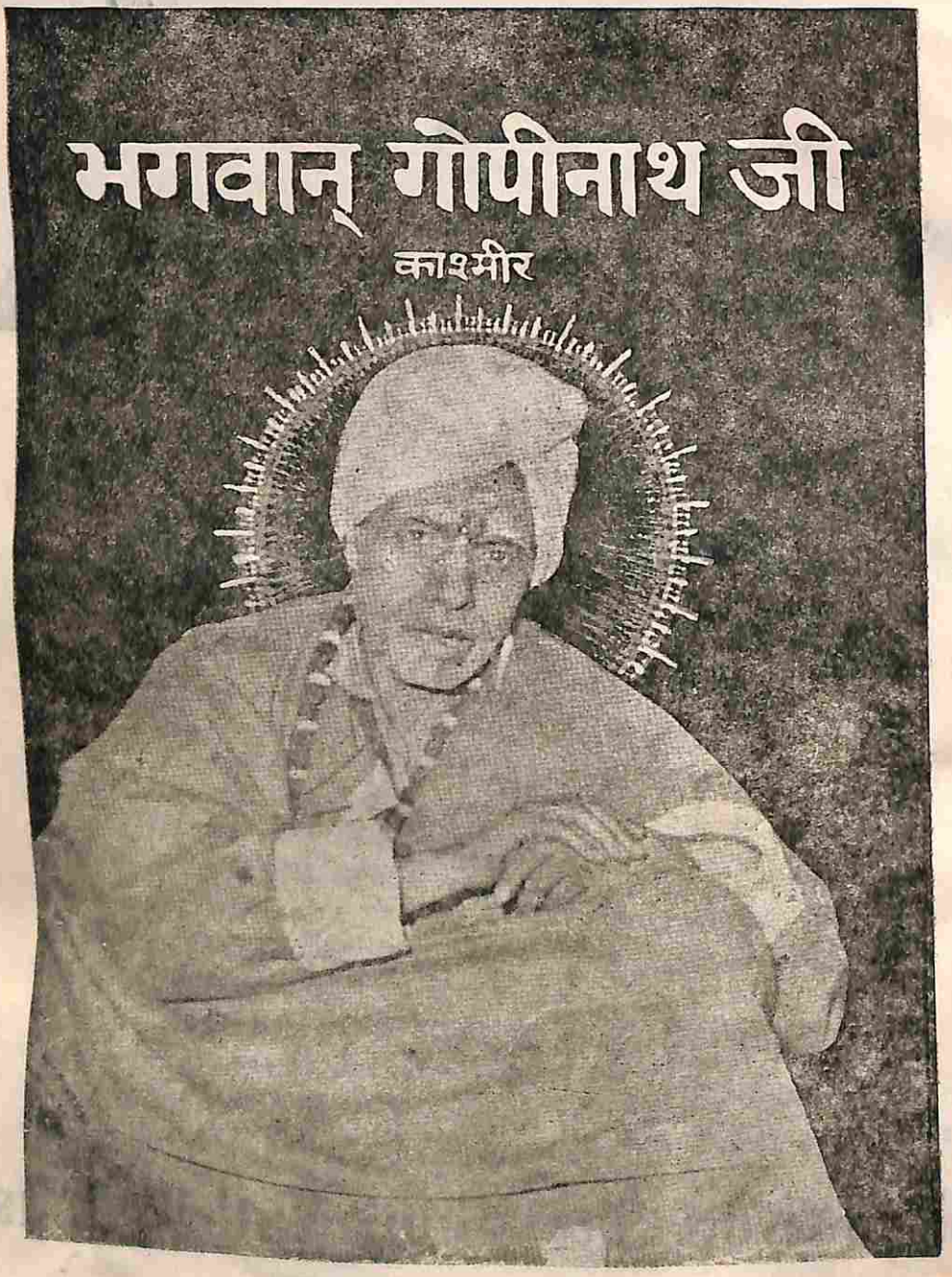
भगवान् गोपीनाथ जी
काश्मीर

EDITORIAL

It is after about three years that we offer, through the Trust journal, our well-wishers, the devotees of the shrine and the votaries of Jagadguru Bhagawan Gopinath Ji whatever additional authentic information could be gathered about Him during the period. Besides, this issue carries articles on matters of spiritual interest and information about the Trust activities during the three-year period mentioned above.

In view of the contents of the journal, the title *The News Letter* was considered inapt. Several of our readers expressed this view. Hence, from now onwards the title of the journal is changed to *The BGT Patrika*, that is, *The Bhagawan Gopinathji Trust Patirka*, mainly at the suggestion of Shri J. N. Ganhar.

The delay in the publication of this issue was caused by the fact that our publications branch was overbusy trying to bring out *The Guru Geeta* with an English translation and another edition of it with a Hindi explanation. This shastra is of great significance for all those practising spiritual discipline. It mentions the qualities and greatness of a true guru, how to recognise a false guru (who must be shunned even though he may have 'initiated' the disciple) and how to worship the guru ; it also contains a number of verses which comprise a hymn in praise of the guru. According to Lord Shiva, who speaks in this shastra to Paarvati, the regular recitation of the *Guru Geeta* earns the disciple much merit.

In view of the great significance of the *Guru Geeta*, priority was given to its two editions in the matter of publication.

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We express our gratitude to all our well-wishers, because of whose regular subscriptions it has been possible to increase the monthly help to each destitute from Rs 60.00 to Rs 70.00 per month. The annual payments made on this account now total about Rs 30,000.00.

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Among the new members of our Board of Trustees are Dr. K. L. Bhat,

Surgeon Specialist and Prof. O. N Bhan of the G. M. College, Srinagar. Only a few weeks ago, the latter was elected Vice-President of the Trust. The young members elected to our Managing Board are S/Shrl Satish Razdan, Satya Bhushan Tickoo, Mukesh Safaya, Pamposh Khazanchi and Deepak Koul. We welcome all these gentlemen.

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Since the last issue of the journal appeared, many of the members of the Trust have passed away. They are: Shri Gwash Lal Malla (August, '83), Hakim Shyam Lal Bhat (Dec, '83), Shri Shambhoo Nath Bhan (Jan, '84), Prof. K. N. Dhar (April, '84), Shri Narayan Raina (April, '84), Shri Amarnath Daftari (Jan, '86), Smt. Dhani Fotedar (Jan, '86) and Shri Gopinath Malla (Feb, '87). We pray that Bhagawanji may shower His grace upon them!

Prof. K. N. Dhar was the second president of the Trust. He worked hard to start several of our new activities and was invariably present at all our functions. His writings about Jagadguru Bhagawanji have been a source of inspiration for many.

Shri Gopi Nath Malla was the Vice-President of the Trust. A life-long celibate, he was a quiet and unassuming *saadhaka* with profound devotion for the Jagadguru; he prayed at the *Ashram* every morning and evening.

Mrs Dhani Fotedar was an inspiration behind some important activities of the Ashram; at her instance her children provided much financial assistance to the Ashram on some critical occasions.

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May Jagadguru Bhagawanji grant us strength to disseminte. His message around the world so that by His grace peace and prosperity reign every-where!

P. N. Kaul,
Convener,
Editorial Board.

The Bhagawan as I Saw Him

By **A. N. Fotedar, IFS (Retd.)**

From time immemorial Kashmir has produced great savants and saints. Their number is legion. Even today there are quite a few who are beacon lights to the seekers of spiritual progress. I am not competent to write about any of them. I am only going to give my personal experiences during my contact with a spiritual giant of Kashmir.

In mid-1958 on a certain Sunday, while a few others and I had finished reciting the *Panchastavi* at the shrine of Maha Kali at Hari Parbat, we resumed our *parikramaa* around the sacred hill. When we arrived near the haloed spot sacred to Hari Devi, one of the group, as if possessed, almost compelled me to go with him to see a saint whom he called the Bhagawan. He was so insistent in his pleadings that I had to agree. I did so only to keep him from making a nuisance of himself.

That incident had a background. About a fortnight or so earlier, it had so happened that the late Nand Lal Ji, popularly known as Nanda Bub, had been staying in a house in our locality. A large number of people would flock to see him and seek his blessings and help in solving their personal problems. I did not then, nor do I even today believe that it is desirable to seek such aid from the saints possessing psychic powers. But my wife insisted that I must accompany her to see him and seek his blessings with regard to an adverse official situation I was then confronted with. I agreed, though reluctantly, to accompany her and so, on a hot afternoon, we went to the house where he was staying. As soon as we entered the room where he was sitting and talking incessantly (to my mind, incoherently too), he asked me to go and sit nearer him. He caught hold of my hands and broke into a hearty laughter and then muttered something that appeared to me incoherent and unintelligible. After a little while, he picked up a piece of paper and wrote on it something in Urdu, put a vermillion mark on it, folded it and asked me to deliver it to someone waiting for it in the Bhairva Temple at Chhattabal. At my wife's insistence, I went with this piece of paper to the temple but only to find it locked from the outside and with all its doors and windows closed. As soon, however, as I was about to go away, someone from within opened a window a little and shouted to ask me if I had any letter from Nand Lal Ji for him. I was taken aback and put the folded piece of paper on the hand thrust through the window without looking at the man's face, and ran away with a thumping heart.

Then I returned to the house where Nand Lal Ji was. Many people of various sects and communities were listening with rapt attention to his incessant, and apparently incoherent talk. The moment I entered, he, without looking towards

me, again asked me to sit in front of him. He offered me the hubble-bubble. Even though I was a smoker then, I was not used to a hubble-bubble and, therefore, did not avail of it and, instead, lit a cigarette. After a little while, he wrote something in Urdu on a piece of paper, put the usual vermilion mark on it, folded it and gave it to me, and asked me to go away. But, on second thoughts, he took the piece of paper back, unfolded it and read it aloud. Then he again folded it and gave it back to me, saying that therein lay the solution of my problem. The writing on that piece of paper can be translated roughly as follows :—

"The Emperor of Kashmir, sporting a crown on his head and seven medals on his breast, Bhagawan Gopi Nath—his present address will be given to you at the haloed spot of Hari Devi. Your file is with him for disposal".

I did not take a serious notice of this laconic message. But my wife felt convinced about the impending turn of events leading to the mitigation of our misfortune. She, therefore, preserved this piece of paper with all the care and reverence that Kashmiri ladies have for the great saints who have the power of *vaaksiddhi* Because of this power whatever the latter utter comes true.

Soon after the incident that took place at the haloed spot of Hari Devi, I related it to my wife. But by then I had forgotten about the message on the piece of paper, but she said that that was the first step in the direction of the amelioration of our misfortune At that time I was not at all aware of the spiritual personality whom people reverently called the Bhagawan. Nor did I Know that he lived at Chandapura in Srinagar The same evening, Shri. Madhusudan, who had broached the subject to me at the haloed spot of Hari Devi, called along with Shri Shankar Nath Zadoo and implored my wife and me to pay our homage to the Bhagawan. They would accompany us. They were not at all aware of the written massage of Nand Lal Ji referred to above. Having been associated with me in the Forest Department, both of them were very eager to avail of the blessings of their preceptor to ameliorate my troubles owing to my suspension from service. In spite of my protestations, my wife agreed to everything and a certain day was fixed for our visit to the Bhagawan. Among other things, a bottle of liquor, some roasted minced meat and a small quantity of *charas* were carried as the offerings.

There were quite a few ladies and gentlemen sitting in a hushed silence in the room. We too sat down, paying our obeisence to him The Bhagawan accepted the offerings and put a little of these into the brazier in front of him. He offered a small quantity of the liquor to each of the male devotees around him and drank the rest. Thereafter, he loaded his *chillum* with *charas* and a few live coals and started smoking it. The minced meat was distributed among all the devotees present. He hardly partook of it,

He talked a lot in low whispers as he was wont to do. What little I could catch of it appeared to me incoherent and not relevant to my problem. After an hour or so, we left the place after repeating our obeisence. This was my first encounter with the Bhagawan. Thereafter, I visited Him quite frequently for a few months and was a witness to many incidents, a few of which I record below :—

One evening, while it was snowing heavily, the Bhagawan, as usual, was in an ecstatic mood, puffing away at his *chillum*. Suddenly, he held the *chillum* in his left hand and looked out through the window near him, shouting, 'O puny mortal, donning an immaculate military uniform covering your huge body and sporting a well-trimmed moustache, you cannot frighten us from across the mountains. We are here under the protection of Shri Sharika and numerous saints and sages, both of the past and the present. Their grace has protected us from marauders and continues to do so. You can do what ever you like in the area on the other side of the mountains, South and West of Kashmir. The yellow race, with slit eyes and snub-noses to the north of us, which you think will come down on us to help you in your evil designs, dare not do so now. The king, whom they will drive out of their area, will not be allowed to come to our sacred land but may be received, and thereafter live in the hills and mountains east of Kashmir. I again tell you, and say so forcefully, "Do not even cast an evil eye on this sacred land and do not expect the slit-eyed, yellow-faced and snub-nosed northerners to help you in this misadventure".

Only the next day the news came that General Ayub Khan had taken over in Pakistan in a military coup and had imposed martial law on the country. In the subsequent yea s the insurrection in Tibet against the Chinese oppression resulted in the flight of the Dalai Lama and his followers into India, east of Kashmir. Later, in 1962, the Chinese launched a massive attack on India, which shook it to its foundations but did not cause any lasting damage. But all fighting took place away from the Kashmir Valley.

Soon after the first meeting of my wife and myself with the Bhagawan, one evening he was as usual in an ecstatic mood. During a breather, while heavily puffing at his *chillum*, he muttered that there was hardly any blame attached to "him", that is, to me and that the entire matter was cooked-up with a motive not at all connected with "him". Thus he referred to my suspension from service on political grounds, as it was alleged that I was a sympathizer of the Democratic National Conference led by the late Shri G. M. Sadiq, which was then in opposition in Jammu and Kashmir Some cooked-up flimsy charges were mentioned in the suspension order and, naturally, no mention of the alleged political sympathy was made. The Bhagawan further said, "After the lapse of a few months, in late spring, an order will be issued reinstating him with some punishment. He will receive the order in Jammu after his return from Delhi. He

will represent against the punishment but in vain. Next year, he will even take the matter to court, which will not give any verdict on it. Then, a couple of years later, a new Government will come to power. It will, on its own, remove the punitive part of the order with retrospective effect and restore him to his original position. Soon thereafter, he will also be promoted".

In late March, 1959 I had unexpectedly to go to Delhi to console my sister-in-law on her father's death. On my return, I halted at Jammu and a friend of mine insisted that I should accompany him to a certain place, which turned out to be the official residence of the then Chief Minister. Before I could retrace my steps, we got caught up in a crowd Along with it, we, too, got pushed in the direction where the Chief Minister was holding audience The moment he noticed me, he called me into his presence and directed me to see the Chief Secretary at my earliest. I did so and received my order of reinstatement from the Chief Secretary. It stipulated that my period of suspension, lasting about ten months, would be treated as leave of whatever kind was due to me and that I would lose two increments permanently. After rejoining, I represented against the punitive part of the order. Since no action was taken on it for over a year, I filed a petition in the State High Court. The court only referred my case back to the Government, instructing them to expedite orders on my review petition. That they did not for over two years. It was only in 1964, when a new Government, headed by the late G. M. Sadiq took office, that orders revoking the punitive part of my reinstatement order, were issued with retrospective effect. Soon after, I was also promoted Conservator of Forests.

One morning, I called on Bhagawanji alone, not to get some succour for myself, but to see how He looked and talked after a night's rest—if at all he had any—and when he had not yet started smoking his *chillum*. After I had paid my obeisance to Him, He talked to me like any normal elderly person, enquiring about the well-being of my family and myself. He ordered a cup of tea to be brought for me. After I had emptied the cup, He looked straight at me, saying, "Look, there is nothing to worry at all about your present predicament Before this issue gets resolved, you have to be prepared to face the death of a close relative, which will badly tell upon your wife. Let that event be over. Then you can expect the settlement of your official matter".

Early the next morning, while our family was about to have breakfast, someone called to inform us that my father-in-law, Pt. Bisheshwar Nath Koul, a retired superintendent of police, had passed away in the early hours of that morning after a massive heart attack.

Thereafter, I visited the Bhagawan at longer intervals and was a witness to a good many incidents connected with other people. However, one evening, while I was sitting in front of him, suddenly a thought crossed my mind about the truth

or otherwise of astrological forecasts. Some years earlier, I had made a somewhat detailed study of astrology and I was not convinced about the absolute truth of the forecasts made on the basis of the planetary conjunctions in a horscope. I still consider it, at best, an empirical science, if one may at all call it a science.

On that particular occasion, as the thought about astrology came to my mind while I was puffing at my cigarette, the Bhagawan passed on his *chillum* to a Kashmiri Pandit sitting beside me and asked him to smoke it. After he had had only one puff, the Bhagawan took the *chillum* away from him. Immediately after, this person turned towards me and started talking, as if possessed, about astrology and planetary conjunctions in the twelve houses of a horscope. I at once became aware that he was talking about my own *janam-kundali* (horoscope). He discussed it in detail and indicated the effect of the various planets on my life. As soon as he had finished talking, I started asking him some questions to elucidate certain points, as I thought he was well-versed in astrology. But I did not at all broach the question as to how he had come to know every detail about my *janma-kundali*. The moment I put to him the first question, the Bhagawan passed his *chillum* once again to him and asked him to have a puff. After the man had done so, he turned to me with an expressionless face. On my insisting that he answer my question, the man muttered with great humility that he knew nothing about astrology and was surprised why I was putting questions to him on the subject. Obviously, whatever he had said earlier during the interval between the first and the second puff at the *chillum* was what the Bhagawan himself was saying through him. When I discovered it to be a fruitless endeavour to try to get the answer to my question from the man, the Bhagawan looked at me with a mysterious smile on his lips and went on puffing at his *chillum* and muttering something that appeared to me to be quite irrelevant to the subject.

I had just learnt to recite the *Panchastavi* and was trying hard to find someone who could explain to me the meaning of the verses. Everyone I thought competent expressed his inability to explain the real and highly esoteric meaning. Though it is easy to translate the verses literally, they lend themselves to several interpretations. I vividly recall that one day, while I was sitting before the Bhagawan, he started reciting clearly and in the proper sequence some verses of Chapter IV of the *Panchastavi*. In one of these, the devotee says to the Divine Mother that, being unfamiliar with grammatical and phonetic nuances, his recitation of the verses might convey an altogether different meaning from what these really have and implores Her to take into account only his prayer, just as the worldly mother, understanding the broken language of a toddler, responds to it appropriately. Then he went on to recite some other verses, concluding with the last two stanzas of Chapter V. Since I did not understand the meaning of these last two verses and of some others,

too, I wished he had explained their respective meanings, if at all he could. And lo and behold, he immediately said that the whole prayer was in praise of the Divine Shakti for arousing the *saadhaka's kundalini* and that, unless one practises the relevant yoga for that purpose under the proper guidance, to recite the *panchastavi*, parrot-like, was not much use. But, as it was a sublime prayer, too, it might be recited as such.

At times his physical condition suggested that all his faculties had withdrawn to some centre in his brain. After some time, however, he would gradually come down to the physical plane and behave accordingly.

I am not at all competent to comment on this aspect of the Bhagawan's personality. I have read some books on Yogic practices and have met quite a few people whose *kundalini* has been aroused. None of them drank or smoked *charas*. Why did the Bhagawan smoke *charas* and drink? Frankly, I do not know for certain. May be his tantric practices were of a different genre. I hope that people who were very close to him have recorded something about the Bhagawan's particular type of *saadhanaa* for the good and guidance of the seekers.

When all is said and done, I consider him to have been one of the greatest souls who went up the spiritual ladder to a point beyond the reach of ordinary mortals. He put up the appearance he did and sometimes behaved seemingly erratically, perhaps to keep off the people who might disturb him in His spiritual pursuits. On several occasions I have noticed that, amidst the din and bustle of devotees (some of whom song hymns to the accompaniment of various instruements) he withdrew wholly within himself, oblivious of everything around Him. When He came out of this state, he had a radiant face and a peculiar glint in his eyes.

I conclude this essay with my obeisance: *JAI BHAGAWAN*, and leave an assessment of his spiritual achievements, if at all possible, to more competent people.

Bhagawan Ji—as I Understand Him

By **Shri R. K. Sapru**

Only that person can write comprehensively and accurately on Bhagawan Ji who has ascended all the steps of spiritual realisation and equals him in spiritual stature. The knowledge of the others about him is bound to be inadequate and imperfect. To know Bhagawan Ji truly is to be oneself a Bhagawan Ji. It is not to copy his life style, but to enter into the Bhagawan-conciousness, which is characterised by knowledge, power and bliss. Bhagwan Ji's *saadhanaa* (spiritual practice) and attainments are a closed book, because he never explained elaborately his view points or anything else about himself. A though he some times dropped a hint, gave some brief admonition when the occasion so demanded or said something at the request of his close disciples, his introversion was immeasurable.

According to Albert Einstein, all the observation, knowledge and explanations of any phenomenon in the Universe are relative to the observer and the outer conditions. Hence, so long as man is drowned in the ocean of the mind, his observation is bound to be limited. That is why every aspirant has a different estimation of Bhagawan Ji and why he bears different relations to different disciples, depending on their capacity, merit, attainments and, above all, their inherent nature. Thus different people read different meanings in his life and his lively presence at the Ashram. Since, as already stated, all observation is relative, the best course would be to transcend the limitations and boundaries of the finite mind. And this is Bhagawan Ji's concern; this is what He helps all sincere aspirants to do.

To some Bhagawan Ji is a power to help in passing examinations, getting success in a worldly enterprise and a solution to worldly tangles while to some others he is a great inspiration for leading a spiritual life. There are also those to whom he is an ever—present reality, guiding their spiritual practice step by step and sheltering them from all the negative pulls of the world There are some surface-onlookers, too, who are repelled by the surface details about Bhagawan Ji; for example, his marijauna smoking, his non-vegetarianism and other un-orthodox ways. They only show their narrow-mindedness and imprisonment in the *three—guna* nature of the mind. They fail to gauge the *Gunateet* and *maya-teet* nature of Bhagawan Ji, which he amply demonstrated during his life time. By *gunateet* and *mayateet* nature, we mean freedom from the ignorance and limitations of the mind and a release from imprisonment in the three mental moods—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* and their effects.

Bahagawan Ji, as is amply borne out by his biography and some other writings on him, was predominently a *shakti* worshipper in accordance with the age-old tradition of Kashmir. He was an ardent devotee of the Divine Mother at

the beginning of his *saadhanaa*. This is proved by his frequent visits to, and sojurn at the Shakti temples of Sharika at Chakreshwar, Jwala at Khrew and Rajna at Ksheer Bhawani. Another concrete proof is the location of his Ashram on the premises of the Durga Mandir, Kharyar. It appears that, after getting a fair amount of response and realization from the Divine Mother, the dynamic aspect of the Reality, he went in for the worship of Shiva or the static pure consciousness aspect of the Reality. His constant use of *marijuana* and *datura* during the seven years of his rigorous penance clearly hint at his worship of Lord Shiva. This may be the reason why he later went on a pilgrimage to the Amarnath Cave. One important aspect of the spiritual practices of Bhagawan Ji was the emission of energy vibrations from either the *Shat Chakras* or through the rhythmic vibration of any part of the body. These well-controlled rhythmic vibrations used to touch the heavens The whole matter is so far shrouded in mystery and no writer has thrown sufficient light on his spiritual practices. The *Spanaa Shastras* of Kashmir Shaivisim, which deal with the vibratory nature of the Ultimate Reality, may help to throw some light on this technique of vibration emission. Nobody need imitate his type of *saadhanaa*, life-style and outer habits. What he practised and did, suited him and his nature and may not suit others His admonition to Sh. Fotedar, "Work hard and try to become Naaraayana" amply hints at his line of spiritual evolution, the magnanimity of his ideal and the line of his super-human *s adhanaa*. His aim was to equal the stature and glory of the gods. He is a fit entity for granting boons and masterly guide for safe human evolution and welfare, as he himself ascended to great heights from the status of a human being, plain and simple.

Bhagawan Ji rose to be a great Shakti incarnate. Subject to the proper response, he has the power to carry innumerable souls across the ocean of *Samsaara*. And the wise thing for us all would be to remain passive recipients while that power works for our upliftment. He is indeed a great power, active in the Universe.

His path and meditative tehnique — After discarding his material sheath, Bhagawan Ji has become even more active as an inspirer for immature spiritual seekers He is an unfailing guide for them and for humanity at large. His way of working is quite unassuming. He works to help and guide a person from behind the scene, so to say. But when the occasion so demands or when he deems it fit, he does not fail to make an appearance.

In the absence of his physical presence, it appears quite necessary to me to throw some light on his path, admonitions and stand on some issues for the benefit of the present *saadhakas** and new entrants, whose number is ever increasing and who are inspired by, and attracted to him. No new entrant need feel bewildered and doubtful about Bhagawan Ji's path, method and technique, in general or regarding his standpoint on various spiritual issues, I give next what I feel all these to be. There may be people who disagaeen with me.

*Those who practise spiritual discipline

Bhagawan Ji, in accordance with the tradition of Kashmir Shaivism, does not advocate a drastically negative approach to life in general. He does not advocate *sanyaasa* or renouncing the world. Nor does he advocate the negative means of suppression, hatha yoga etc. His method is in tune with nature, individual as well as universal. He is not for an ascetic or monastic way of life, though he himself practised something of it. He accepts your past evolution, your innate nature or what is called *praarabdha* or destiny, your plus points and minus ones. Your past, present and future is an open book to him. He is an adept in assessing the correct position of an aspirant and leads him onwards from where he stands. His method is fool-proof, though slow and steady. He is mindful of the quality of his devotees or disciples and not of their numbers. He assesses how much ground an aspirant has already covered and the ground he is yet to cover. The way he shows particular aspirants is in tune with the innate nature or swadharma, of that individual. His emphasis is primarily on practice rather than on theory, and he does not advocate much reading of the shastras as, without practice, reading is sheer waste of time. Besides, bookish knowledge makes an egotist of a person and, later on, he or she finds it difficult to conquer that egotism.

Surrender and true devotion are of paramount importance to him.

He will boldly cross the ocean of maya who, though seemingly attached to the world, has given up all worldly desires and ambitions.

—Jagadguru Bhagawan Gopinath Ji

An Enigmatic Saint

By **Prof. B. N. Parimoo**

To understand saints is a hard nut to crack and to write about them still harder. They are eely and slip out of your unsteadied mind. Often they become unfathomable. All the same, it is worthwhile to set down personal experiences with them and jot down one's impressions. That way we understand what others say and get rid of prejudice. Prejudice in any field, particularly in approaches to matters which touch religious sentiments, has often done much harm to the world of man. Hagiology sometimes smacks of cheap insinuations and warped judgements, resulting in a lot of discord among people. The need is to remove the cobwebs of prejudice and understand men and matters in a more rational way.

God-men have been the benefactors of mankind and moulders of society as much as scientists and technologists, perhaps more, for their influence functions through the unspoken word. They re-form our mind, which is the backbone of culture.

Down the corridors of time, we have assessed the greatness or otherwise of saints and seers by the miracles they performed. They are accepted as great, primarily on the strength of something done, which is not explained by the ordinary laws of Nature. We say that their ways are mysterious Shri Rama could trounce Ravana more owing to his divine powers than to his physical valour, for Ravana's prowess was equally great. Even birds and animals obeyed Shri Rama's behests, because he was God incarnate. The reluctance of Arjuna to fight changed into a firm resolution and faith in the Lord's words, the moment he beheld the Universe in the Lord as *Viraat*. The miracles of Moses and Christ are no less puzzling. The Israelites and the people of Galilee followed them respectively because they performed miracles Polemical discussions and scientific analysis do not shake the faith even of the most rational people in the miracles performed by god-men. Perhaps the faith in Science is growing day by day, as its miracles are no less astonishing than those of mystical geniuses, and there is a very thin partition between the genius of the spirit and that of matter. All that we can say with certainty is that they function on two different planes.

Bhagawan Gopi Nath Ji was a spiritual genius, without a shadow of doubt. But the kink is that in common parlance it is forgotten that god-men are as much human as anybody else. My experiences with the Bhagawan set down here occurred very much on the plane of everday life.

On a few occasions I went to see him to pay my respects, as he was my eldest aunt's second son, besides being a saint usually surrounded by many devotees. They went to him to receive his blessings and find solutions to their mundane pro-

blems. Never did I go to him to seek help in the solution of any problem of mine. I went because I wanted to go and see him. Since people said that he was a great saint, why should I, too, not go to see him, I thought. The first time I went particularly to pay my respects was when he and the family lived at Dalhasanyar, Habbakadal.

It was summer. He was sitting in a corner of the large room, called *'kani'* in Kashmiri, in the third and the uppermost storey of an oldish building. He was dressed in an immaculately white rafal *Phiran* and had a white turban on. In passing, I may remark that all my life I never saw him with an unturbaned, bare head. May be because he belonged to the old school of the orthodox tradition, when a bare-headed gentleman was a rare sight. As I sat near him, I found him with half-shut eyes, busy smoking his *chillam*. For many long minutes he did not seem to take notice of my presence. I shuffled intentionally to attract his attention, but he was totally withdrawn into himself. The only other member of the family in the room was his elder sister, Devki Ded, the elder daughter of the eldest sister of my father. I accosted her with customary, respectful salutations and she wished me, enquiring about my mother and the other members of my family. As the Bhagawan was smoking, my eyes caught sight of the bleeding big toe of his right foot. The neglected wound was almost festering I asked Devki Ded how he had got his foot hurt and in her usual piquant tone she said that in his carelessness he must have struck his foot against some stone while going to Hariparbat. She further added that he did not care for the wound and washed his feet in cold water at the tap I eagerly offered to fetch some ointment or medicine, but he simply smiled and took a pinch of ashes from his *chilam* and put it in the wound, remarking that it would get well before long. A few days later, I went to the place again and found that the toe had healed completely. I did not take that as a miracle, for I recollected that a long way back in the early thirties I, too, had had a similar experience. When communal passions ran high in the city of Srinagar, the stalwart leaders of the Kashmiri Pandit community had given a call to the youth to be self-dependent. One of my cousins had, in the experiment, cleft one of his own feet while chopping a piece of wood. Medical aid not being available, we were guided into a den of *charas* smokers at a 'Takia', on the bank of the Jhelum at Maharajganj The ashes of the smoked *charas* and tobacco healed the gaping wound in a week's time. So I was not much surprised to see the Bhagawan's toe whole and sound. But I was really surprised when my brother told me that, on his visiting the place, Devki Ded had complained that the Bhagawan had not eaten for many days on end, and that the Bhagawan had retorted that he had been smoking *chilam* after *chilam* all the time; was that not food enough? I could not well make out how he could subsist for days to gether witthout food and how he could smoke so much on an empty stomach. Tobacco and *charas* became his food!

Next, I went to pay my respects to the Bhagawan at the house of the late Pandit Shyamlal Malla at Chandapora. The room was almost filled to capacity. There were devotees of all shades of faith. There were some mendicants and sanysins, too, besides a troupe of singers and musicians who had come to entertain the saint that evening. A large earthen pot covered with a protective wickerwork covering from outside was full of a glowing fire into which the saint offered oblations of dry fruit and the usual '*samagri*' called '*Agnihotri*' or the ritualistic fire-sacrifice of the Vedic tradition. But he made the offering without muttering any Vedic hymns or scriptural texts. With his mouth shut, he made the offerings with his right hand, as it were mechanically. I strongly felt that God listens to the unspoken prayers of a saint!

I quietly took a seat near the door. But soon I noticed that, though his hand was busy making the oblations, his eye had not missed my presence. As I said 'Namaskar', quite audibly he enquired about the health of my mother and the other members of the family, though only in a sentence, and continued to be busy with his oblations, with his eyes half-shut. I wondered at his other-worldly demeanour and total detachment. The external world suddenly disappeared from his mind's eye Just as I was thinking like this, one of the 'Sadhus' got up and the rest followed suit They begged leave of the saint Instantaneously, the Bhawagan put his right hand into his *phiran*-pooket, brought out some two-rupee notes and handed these over to a young man sitting near him, directing him to pay these to the 'sadhus' about to leave the room. They had not been invited; it was not an act of charity or benevolence, nor could it amount to '*dakshina*'. Perhaps the Bhagawan understood and instinctively obeyed the time-honoured dharmic injunction that a 'sadhu' should not leave your home empty-handed. Soon after, I, too, rose to leave. As I looked towards Him to say 'namaskar,' he beckoned me to go near him. I was rewarded with two big handfuls of '*naveed*' of sugar candy, almonds etc. I was filled with joy and wonderment. Though he appeared to be self-absorbed, he was intensely aware of his surroundings.

Once I went to see the Bhagawan at Rishi Mohalla at the house of the late Pandit Madho Joo Sothu. When I entered his room, there was a lady sitting close to him, weeping like hell. The Bhagawan's temper ran very high; it was at the white-heat pitch. He shouted abuses and the most obscene vituperation. The *chilam*, held rather high in his left hand, he gesticulated furiously with his right arm and hand. His usually half-shut eyes were wide open and flashing. I did not understand the situation. I was shaken by the tears and the desperately helpless look of the lady. But I could do little about it. Dumb-founded, I sat quietly in a corner, with my nerves shaken. The lady in woe left the room and another old woman entered and sat very close to the saint By and by, she brought out of the left, wide cuff of her *phiran* big morsels of uncooked cheese and offered them to the saint to eat. Lump after lump of

cheese was swallowed down without much chewing and I could guess that he must have eaten at least two kilos of raw cheese! The cheese consumed, he filled the *chilam*, lit it and went on smoking, heedless of who there was in the room The flames of the *chilam* rose high in the air. The saint closed his eyes; not a trace of the angry mood was left. The woman with the cheese made a respectful obeisance and left the room. I, too, left quietly, flabbergasted The next day I learnt that the weeping lady had lost her ailing son. The saint had said that he could do nothing for her.

On yet another occasion, I found him standing alone in his room He was about to leave for Ksheerbhawani, as some devotees had arranged a trip in a boat (doonga) As I entered, he sat down, enquired after my people, particularly my mother, briefly and asked me to have a cup of tea. He filled the *chilum* with tobacco and *charas*, and I put the charcoal on it He asked me to smoke, but, seeing that I was hesitant, he took the *chilam*. He again asked me to have a cup of tea. Just then Devki Ded entered the room emitting a tornado of words, urging him to come to the *ghat* where people were waiting for him in the boat. When he repeated to her to bring tea, she admonished me to have tea next time I protested that I did not need tea at that time. I wondered how the Bhagawan obeyed her very meekly and tamely, as if mesmerized. Devki Ded had served him all his life with dedicated care I left the room rather upset, what with the harangue of Devki Ded and my foolish refusal to smoke the *chilam*. I did smoke a cigarette now and then, those days.

Bhagawan Ji was a *jeevan-mukta*, a completely emancipated soul. What realms of spirituality he roamed in with his half-shut eyes, few can tell. But the seeds of sainthood were surely sown in him very early in life when he lived in our house and later in our neighbourhood, and left his grocer's shop open and ran up to his house at Munshi Mohalla and entered a room which he did not leave for months. His withdrawal into himself was an enigma to me, then.

Extracts from a Letter to Shri Justice Katju

*By **Major Radhakrishen Raina Retd)***

Shri Shridhar Joo Dhar and Shri S N. Fotedar of Shri Bhagawan Gopi Nath Ji Trust, Srinagar, have shown me your review on the book published by their Trust on the life and *saadhanaa* of Bhagawan Shri Gopinath Ji. My attention was also drawn to the exhaustive letter written by you to Swami Lakshman Joo, Shaiva Acharya. They have persuaded me to express myself on your observations in the letter

Since you have touched certain points requiring a vast knowledge of the Shaakta and Trika systems, both of which have formed a valuable part of the cultural heritage of Kashmiri Pandits, I feel quite incompetent to resolve your doubts and answer your queries However, on the persuasion of my above-mentioned friends, I shall attempt to make a few general observations for the present.

Kashmiri brahmins have been following the *krama* system for ages in their spiritual pursuits and *prakriyas* and, on the same basis. Laughakshya Muni formulated his system of *karma kaanda*, which is prevelant to this day in the Valley This system encompasses our whole culture, be it Tantrik or Vedic.

Krama is bound by Neeti (Order) and delimited by the spatial and temporal order (*Desha*, *Kaala* and form) in as much as all the worldly transactions (लौकिक व्यवहारा:) are in this material world. Naturally, all our *paddhaties* of the local kula-Devis, in fact all the other numerous ritualistic *saadhanaas*, as ordained through our scriptures, follow *krama* strictly, and one has to go by it to attain results. Cause and effect in *kramic-kriya* cannot be wished away. Hence the importance of *krama* To achieve a goal, one has to proceed slowly and steadily, step by step. This has to be so till one reaches the outer bounds of the empirical domain, where *krama* reigns supreme. Kashmiris have followed this system according to their Devi *paddhaties* as also in the *karma-kaanda*. In other words, we find that *krama* is a highly determinate process with a determinate contemplation, as we proceed with our *paddhati-krama* throughout our Tantrik and Vedic rituals. The same *krama* ultimately leads to the *turiya* state, when one crosses the empirical bounds and Neeti. Then the *krama* and *kriya* cease. Thenceforth, it can be called (if at all it can be called anything) an automatic process under divine guidance, as the fruition of personal effort Here we might say that we enter some sort of vacuum or void. To my mind, it is not so. The feeling of its being so is proof enough that consciousness in a higher form, (rather a refined form or, should I say, in its real and natural form) comes to light After some time, the chief *spanda* (प्रतिष्ठित) of consciousness is grasped. The faint determinative

*45. Karan Nagar, Srinagar, Kashmir.

knowledge still persists. By and by, this, too, fades away and, with it, the individual mind Then the all-pervading consciousness dawns. This consciousness is not devoid of the conscious feeling, the only difference in the present and the previous consciosness being that one is now experiencing its subjective aspect alone, the objective one having altogether faded. It is pure *prakaasha* with *vimarsha*. It is the negation of the state of objective consciousness and the acquiring, by stages, of full subjective consciousness which has been technically categorised into five topmost states (tattvas) by shaaktas and Shaivas alike.

In between the full bloom of the state of the all-pervading consciousness and the so-called void (shoonya), the *saadhaka* may get the **saaksha'-kaaras* of all that he may be contemplating The reality of the state stands clearly before him. But the objective mind and determinate knowledge still persist. That is not possible in its absence. *Sanskaaras* and *vikalpas* in their subtle form also persist and the *saadhaka* may pass on those impressions or visions to others or keep these secret, in accordance with the instructions of the preceptor. It was around these *saakshaatkaras* that the guide-lines for the aspiring *saadhakas* were woven by our enlightened saints and sages of yore.

When the *turiya* state is attained, determinate knowledge is no more The empirical world gets dissolved. One enjoys the all-pervading bliss of the *paraa* state. Vaikhuri, Madhyamaa and Pashyanti get merged in the reverse order into *paraa* itself. The self, too, gets merged with it. I-ness alone in its subjective aspect remains; this is called *Purna Ahantaa*. This is Samaadhi. Though initially of shorter durations, it lasts longer with constant *saadhanaa*. This is the *Nirvikalpa*, when one has become one with Him. He and She in this state are indistinguishable and this is the Agamic Shiva-Shakti *Yamala*. It is not the consciousness of nothingness or *shoonya* but a feeling of Being. And it is the Being of "I" alone, which is Divine Bliss. To the *saadhaka's* dismay, this state does not persist. Notwithstanding such complete immersion, it is only a glimpse of the Divine-Light. It is still a contained consciousness of the container, and not the universal or all-pervading consciousness. The physical limitations persisting, it is still of the nature of the *ghata-Aakasha*, though, in essence it is the all-pervading *Aakaasha*. So long as the limitations of the body and its accompanying attributes continue, the *vyutthaana* state comes repeatedly. It stops only in the *turiyatita* state. when only the supreme I-consciousness remains, which persists thenceforth for ever in its static aspect as Parama-Shiva, as the all. Beingness and consciousness in his *Nishkriya* state. This is the ultimate goal of a real yogi and it is possible only when the physical frame is cast off. This is the goal of both the Shaakta and the Shaiva The former tries to attain it through *Chakra Poojan* and the latter, through *Samaavesha* both in the *Samadhi* and the *vyutthaana* state. The Shaakta way ordains *Kundalini*

*Having the vision of a deity etc. in a percepsible form.

jaagaran as a must, as an aid for the dissolution of the elements for attaining the higher consciousness through detailed *Praatahkriti* and *Bhutashudhhi*. Shaiva and Trika have prescribed their own *upaayas*, the aim being the same. The difference is only in the modes, which will be referred to later on.

Anutara (अ) and visargar (अ:) represent to the Trika-saadhaka the two states of Parama-Shiva in the विश्वोत्तीर्ण and विश्वमय: (Transcendental and empirical) forms. Both these states are aspired for by the *saadhakas* following both the *maargas* (paths) in their *saadhanaa*. A *shaakta* attains these through his *Chakra-Poojan* and the Trikaite through his prescribed meditation (realising unity in diversity and diversity in unity) We may note here the *maanasik* (mental)-Pooja of the Shri Chakra, which has been prescribed particularly for the *shaakta saadhaka* in the later stages of his *saadhanaa*. His meditation and that of the Trikaite differ very little here both in aim and mode The details of the Shri Chakra are nothing but the total aggregate of the 36 *tattvas* of the Shaiva/Trikaite and are placed in the Chakra in the ascending and the descending order.

The shaakta regards *Shakti* as the supreme goal, while the shaivite considers the Shaktimaan (Parama Shiva) to be supreme. Is it not only a *kalpanaa* (some thing imagined) framed on the empirial level? Can power remain separate from its possessor? They are the two aspects of the one, the two sides of the same coin What alone seems to be different is the approach and not the aim. The approaches differ because of the different types of determinate cognition and this determinate knowledge (परिकल्प) only leads to the variety in manifestations. But the manifestations in their introvert aspect are one with Samvid (संवित्) while the extrovert aspect is only tinged with it.

The Triputi of Pramaataa, Pramaana and Prameya functions in determinate cognition (ज्ञानम्). This Triputi becomes one, in its introvert aspect, with the I-consciousness and there the difference apparent in operational modes ceases. The modes, too, lose the sense of distinction. Cognition (ज्ञानम्) in its pure form shines. The Universe is a display of the Shakti of Paramashiva for both the Shaakta and the Shaiva However, the Shaakta contemplates the Supreme Shakti as the Bindoo in our *Paddhati Poojas* of *Kuladevis* and the Shakti's multifarious manifestations on the all-pervading and ever-present screen (शक्ति) of Shiva (संवित्). It is through this Supreme inherent power (Shakti) of Parama Shiva that His objective aspect is manifested as the Universe. For the Shaiva student and *saadhaka*, the visible Universe is the display of *aabhaasas* alone of knowledge and Vimarsha (ज्ञानम् and विमर्श). The light of consciousness gets split and united by the power of Vimarsha resting always on the I consciousness and the action seems to be constantly creating, maintaining and destroying, when actually nothing is created or destroyed Creation is only

a disylay of *aabhaasas*. It is only His own light of consciousness wnich becomes manifest on the I—consciousness itself. Nothing can be seen, felt or done unless and until it rests on the I—The truth is that it is this I that manifests itself on every plane just as it does on the lowest plane, the Jiva state. The Maayic veil displays itself in numerous forms. These are technically called (पाश:) or the fetters of *Moha*, by the Shaivite and he himself is the pashu, entangled by these Mohic pashas and has thus forgotton his profound faculties and true nature He indeed has forgotten Himself and His boundless power. The *saadhanaa* of a Trika-Yogin consists in removing this veil, breaking the Mohic fetters and recognizing in himself the patibhava (पतिभाव:), the state of being the master. This is *pratibhijna*. All the three branches of Kashmir Shaivism—Agama, Spanda and Pratibhijna—aim at the same goal, self-recogni ion. The removal of the *paashas* described and defined in the various Shaiva treatises, constitutes what we call the Shiva upaayas, the essence of which to my mind, is the same, no matter what and which line the *saadhaka* follows, as the results achieved at every step are the same, though the methods and their terminologies differ The recognition of the Self for a Trika *saadhka* is *Mokhsa* All types of *saadhanaa*, of whatever denomination, lead to the same state, which is only the identity of the limited subject with the Purna—Pramaataa-his own Self This he can attain only through constant meditation and the Trika-upaayas

For the shaakta sadhaka, too, the-same holds good. The only difference is that he follows the *krama*-bound Paddhati-kriya with deep devotion, concentration and faith There are some *upaayas* which are basic and common to all the *saadhanaas*; the rest differ only in method, the objective being the same. *Pratah-Kriti* and *Boota-shuddhi* are a must in all *Paddhati-Poojas*. These are meant to refine the elements and purify the mind The awakening of the kundalini with constant practice or through the Guru's grace shortens the effort and facilitates the *saadhakas*, work. In fact, all Trika-Acharyas have themselves invariably followed such a line. This is clearly stated in the description of the various triangles, *chaturas* s and *padmas*, which comprise the Shri Chakra. According to Shiva, there is no state where He is not manifest; He is the back-ground against Which His shakti displays Herself in countless aabhaasas (manifestations). It is Shiva Himself, His own Being (सत्ता) in Himself, His own self-luminous and all—pervading conseiousness, Prakaasha and Vimarsha—His inseparable Svatantara Shakhti (Independent Energy) It has always been so. Creation is His *lila* through His Shakti. Only, on the descending plane, the consciousness is rendered objective and so impure. But that is knowable in order to give creation and its transactions a form and shape. To a Shaiva the origin of the vast Universe is the (किञ्चित् चलनमात्मम्) a primordial *spanda* of this vast चिदाग्नि: and to a *shaakta* the venerable Bindoo is the seed of all that is to be. This is the पूर्णाहंता.

This is the *paraa* the fine primordial divine ripple, (the supreme will to expand) which is part and parcel of this limitless sea of consciousness; it is only a transformation of निष्कल: (Parmashiva) into His kinetic form (Shakti) which is pregnant with an immeasurable power of action and knowledge. It is a tiny ripple which, through its own inherent power, causes a multitude of waves, of myriad sizes and shapes on the sea's own surface The change suffered in the process is really no change in its nature or essence. It is the same protozone-cell dividing and subdividing itself, producing and reproducing, as in our known biological process, into various shapes and forms and yet not losing its original nature and essence, The essence and contents of cells everywhere are the same. This is the *lila* of Paramashiva, brought about by His Maayaa, His own *svaatantrya Shakti* (independent Energy). To a Shaakta, the Bindoo is the primordial cell, dimensionless and capable of expanding in all dimensions and representing the Divine will, *kriya* (action) and knowledge, out of which all that exists grows. Once the fission takes place, the Supreme Energy bursts out with the Divine sound and the Shaakta's world starts The Shri Chakra covers the whole of creation, both empirical and beyond. The saadhaka contemplates on the same in detail, in both the Srishti (Creation) and the samhaara (Destruction) *kramas*.

For a Trika Shaiva Saadhaka, the contained consciousness in the container in his Jiva form is in essence and nature the same as the Supreme Consciousness, from which he has descended The omniscience and the omnipotence are not lost, but become latent The all-pervading power of knowledge and action becomes limited just as his individual soul itself is It is again the doing of Maayaa Shakti. She measures the immeasurable by manifestations, i. e., limits everything through Her veiling power, which displays duality, a multiplicity coming out of unity and again the multiplicity merging into unity. This is Parama Shiva's free will.

I owe it to you to express deep appreciation for your thoughtful letter to Swami Ji. I was not surprised to learn about his silence over your enquiries. The reason, to my mind, can be only that such matters, which an aspirant attempts to get out of a yogin cannot be described in a letter at length, much less discussed through letters. He can, at best guide by hints.

Some Miracles of Bhagawan Ji

By **Mrs Kusum Handoo, M.A., B.Ed**

This article is based on a signed note by the late Shri Narayan Joo Handoo of Chandapora, Sathu, Srinagar, and the information provided to the present writer by his better half, Smt. Prabhavati Handoo, called Gauri Ji by her parents. The Handoo couple have been among the greatest devotees of Jagadguru Bhagawan Shri Gopinath Ji and were closely associated with Him for several decades. He would stay with them in Srinagar or at Shri Handoo's places of posting for several weeks. Bhagawan Ji considered Mrs Handu to be as good as his daughter and whenever, after taking no food for months on end, He was peresuaded to take some, He would generally direct that the food be cooked by her.

In 1946, Bhagawan Ji, accompanied by his sister, Devki Dedi and some devotees, went on a pilgrimage to Shri Amar Nath Ji. The devotees included Shri Narayan Joo Handoo, Smt. Prabhavati Handu alias Gauri Ji, the Handoo couple's ten-years-old son, Moti Lal Ji, Shri *Bhola Nath Handoo (Sikh), father of Mrs Handoo and some others. The miracles that took place then are given below;

a) At Chandanwari, Shri Bhola Nath Handoo sought Bhagawanji's permission to send Mrs Handoo and Moti Lal Ji back home as the boy was running high fever. Refusing permission, Bhagawan Ji gave the boy from His tea-cup part of the dregs (some boiled tea leaves). As soon as the boy had finished chewing it, his temperature fell to the normal level.

b) Once Bhagawan Ji suddenly got

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*The late Shri Narayan Joo Handoo has expressed a desire in his signed note that the following information about Shri Bhola Nath be made public, as the reference to him in *Bhagawan Gopi Nath Ji of Kashmir* (Page 111) gives a distorted picture of him, if at all it can be considered his picture. The following is the relevant information. Shri Handoo gives:

Shri Bhola Nath Handoo (Sikh) was the son of Shri Mukund Ram Handoo (Sikh) of Rainawari, the astrologer of Maharaja Pratap Singh. The family came to be known as Sikh after Shri Bhola Nath's great grand father, Shri Jeevan Bhat Handoo made a translation of *Shri Guru Granth Saheb* at the request of a V I. P from outside the State. Shri Bhola Nath was educated in Persian, Urdu and Hindi; he could also play upon the sitar. He served for some time in the State Fire Brigade Department and then in the Food - Control Department.

He came into contact with Bhagawan Ji at the age of 27 when the latter was eighteen This friend of youth later became one of Bhagawanji's disciples and their close association lasted as long as 45 years, till Shri Bhola Nath's death.

up from sleep at about 3 a m and asked Shri Bhola Nath Handoo and some others to follow Him, as they had to rescue a party of pilgrims, who had gone ahead of the *Chhari* and lost their way. After the rescue party had gone some distance, they could find the strayed pilgrims and led them to the right path. But for the timely help, the pilgrims might have tumbled down mountain slopes and lost their lives. Such was Bhagawanji's compassion for those in trouble !

c) Some time after the party had camped at Wavjan, above the sacred and beautiful Sheshnag Lake (about 14,000 ft above the sea level) the sky was overcast with menacing black clounds. The pony owners-who had accompanied *yatras*, thousands of pilgrims each and were fully conversant with the moods of Nature enroute apprehended such a heavy and prolonged downpour that it would not be possible for the *Chhari* and the pilgrims to proceed any further. Smt Devki Dedi told Bhagawanji that some people were accompanying them at her invitation and that a safe pilgrimage for them was an issue of prestige for her. She prayed to Him that the weather might improve. Thereupon, He asked Shri Bhola Nath to load His *chillum* with hashish and live coals After smoking a large quantity of hashish, and pointing towards the clouds, He said 'You have come from the west. Settle down in Sheshnag.' After some time, the clouds suddenly broke, the sky was all blue and it was so hot that people even took off their sweaters.

d) Bhagawanji's party was divided into two groups, women and men. The group of women, who went ahead, thought that Bhagawanji was with the men who, in turn, thought that He was with the women. But He lay at some distance supine and seemingly asleep. When Shri Bhola Nath tried to 'wake Him up,' Bhagawanji said, 'What have you done ? Don't you see everything around is scorched; I was trying to water this area' Shri Bhola Nath said, 'But, Sir, rain will mean great difficulty for us It may lead to some dangerous situation.' Bhagawanji replied that no harm would be done to the party. All along the rest of the journey, Bhagawanji and party were in the sun; the rain followed immediately after.

e) On the day of the *darshan*, the party had a dip in the ice cold water of the Amaraavati and proceeded up the stairs towards the holy cave. Three of them— Bhagawanji, Shri Bhola Nath and Mrs Handoo did not go up

but stood below the stairs at Bhagawanji's behest. Bhagawanji took the customary coconut offering to Lord Shiva in his right hand. With drawing the hand inside his "pheran", he put the coconut near his left arm-pit, pressing it in place with the arm. He was steadily gazing towards the icy *lingam* in the holy cave. Shri Bhola Nath asked his daughter, Mrs Handoo, to look in the direction in which Bhagawanji was looking. She could see above the icy *lingam* and just below the ceiling of the cave on a shelf-like formation, three heads. Were they those of Lord Shiva, the Divine Mother Paarvati and Lord Ganesha? When Bhagawanji pressed the left hand out through the 'pheran' sleeve, there was no indication of the co-co-nut still being in the arm-pit.

f) On their return, Bhagawanji, Shri Bhola Nath and the members of the Handoo family went to Anantnagh, where Shri Narayan Joo Handoo was posted; the rest of the party left for Srinagar. The Handoo family servant, Lassa, who had also accompanied them to Shri Amar Nath Ji, had a sudden attack of some mysterious dis-ase, and his whole body was swollen. All were worried about him. But Bhagawanji offered him his *chillum* and instantaneously he got quite well.

The following are some more miracles :—

1. About a week after returning from the pilgrimage, Bhagawanji and the Handoo family decided to visit Gautam Nag, a holy place about three kilometers from the Anantnagh town, towards Mattan. Even though only a vegetarian meal may be taken at Gautam Nag, they carried, at Bhagawanji's behest, their lunch consisting of cooked rice and fish curry As the party was having their lunch near the spring, the *mahant* of the place Swami Gwasha Kak Ji, appeared on the scene. In very great anger, he asked Bhagawanji why, even though the latter was a *brahmachari* (celebate) and *saadhu* (saint), he was taking fish at a holy place where nothing non—vegetarian might be taken. Bhagawanji said calmly, 'Who has eaten the fish? If you want them back, here they are.' And He put two of His fingers into His mouth and vomitted two living fish, which jumped into the spring. The Swami prostrated before Him and prayed for forgiveness.

2. After a week or so, the family, along with Bhagawanji, visited another holy place in the Anantnagh District, called Trisandhyaa It is a miraculous place : the holy tunnel shaped 'spring' there remains bone-dry for most of the year, but during a brief period, water wells out in fairly good quantities twice or thrice a day, and pilgrims bathe in it. As part of their worship of the holy spring, they drop flowers and thrice—washed grains of rice into it. During the intervals between the welling out of water. the spring becomes so waterless that mice appear and eat the rice. On the day Bhagawanji was there, *Trisandhyaa* appeared—i. e. water welled out—eight times. Then a woman cam there to

absolve herself of her sins by bathing in the holy *Trisandhyaa* but, even after a long wait, *Trisandhyaa* did not appear. Then she prayed to Bhagawanji that it might appear. But He, in great anger, told her, *'Mondee* (O wretched one), why did you let the cows burn to death in your burning house? Why did you not let them loose in time? You have committed such a heinous sin that, as long as you are here, the holy *Trisandhyaa* will not appear'. All those present urged her angrily to go away After she had gone a little distance, *Trisandhyaa* appeared. She returned to take a dip. But no sooner did she reach the holy place than *Trisandhyaa* disappeared. After she had flinally gone, it appeared again and all present bathed in it for the ninth time that day!

3. In mid-1948, Bhagawanji along with Shri Bhola Nath and the Handoo family, went to the Nishat Bagh by boat. Bhagawanji took up one of the dead fish they carried to be cooked as part of their lunch. He rocked it in His lap for many minutes and then threw it into the Dal Lake. And lo and behold! As soon as it touched the water, it regained life, a normal and healthy fish now, it swam about—and away!

4. In 1947, soon after the tribal raid on Kashmir, orders were issued for Shri Narayan Joo Handoo's transfer from Anantnagh to Baramula where he was reluctant to go, as the town lay waste owing to the depredations of the raiders. But he was asked to hand over to his substitute and so he did. Immediately after, he left for the residence of Shri Madhav Joo (the son-in-law of a sister of Bhagawanji) in Rishi Doori, Habba Kadal, Srinagar, where Bhagawanji lived those days. Shri Handoo stayed there for the night. At about 3 a. m., Bhagawanji, having had his ablutions at the water tap in the compound below, entered the room and, on seeing Shri Handoo, asked him how he had come from Anantnagh. On being told every thing, He told him that he had not completed three years in Anantnagh and so his transfer order would be cancelled the following morning. Those who had issued the order were as good as blind. They would very shamefully (literally, with grass-rope bangles around their wrists) lose their jobs. All this seemed impossible to Shri Handoo at the moment. On the following day, however, he sought an interview with the Emergency Officer, Anantnagh, who told him that the transfer order had been issued without the latter's consent, and so was not valid. Needless to say that Shri Handoo continued at his place of posting at Anantnagh. After about six months, all those who had been involved in the issue of the transfer order were suspended from service and, on reinstatement after some time, demoted. Within a year, all of them resigned from their respective posts.

5 Once, during the late Maharaja Hari Singh's reign, there was a proposal to promote a high-ranking official of the Anantnagh District The official hoped to join the new post in Srinagar only the following day He however, sent one of his men with Shri Handoo to seek Bhagawanji's blessings in this regard. But, when the man made the request, Bhagawanji told

him that the official concerned would not be promoted; he would, instead, be dismissed from the service. When the proposal was submitted to the Maharaja for his approval, he directed that the official be dismissed from the service.

6. Once Bhagawanji and Shri Bhola Nath went to Kshir Bhavani. On the way, the former remarked that his right arm had suddenly broken. The other wondered why He had made that remark. On their return, they went to Alikadal in Srinagar, where Bhagawanji's family lived those days, and found that Bhagawanji's younger brother had died in an accident. Bhagawanji, however, did not stay there for long, but soon left for Hari Parbat.

7. On a certain day in April, 1954, Shri Bhola Nath felt unwell. Accompanied by his daughter, Gauriji (Mrs Prabhavati Handoo), he went to Rishi Duri to pay his obeisance to Bhagawanji. They talked for about an hour. Then Bhagawanji ordered a *gadvi* (a kind of liquid –container) full of water, to be brought. He asked Shri Bhola Nath to look into it and did so himself, too. After some time, He started blowing into it so hard that water was blown out of it. When about half the water had been blown out, it started raining heavily on the compound side while it was quite sunny on the other (the Jhelum) side. When the *gadvi* was quite empty, it started raining on the Jhelum side. The significance of this event is a mystery to Mrs Handoo.

After his return home that day, Shri Bhola Nath was heard uttering only '*Aum*'. The same day, the Rama Navami Day, he breathed his last.

The next morning, Shri Shankar Nath Zadoo a great devotee of Bhagawanji and daily pilgrim to Hari Parbat, went to inform Him about Shri Bhola Nath's passing away (Bhagawanji had gone the previous day to Shri Ram Joo purohit's house near Chakreshwar at Hari Parbat) But Bhagawanji, on seeing him, said, '*Kya sa Bhola Nath gava*? (Has Bhola Nath passed away?)' He did not need to be informed. Earlier, obviously regarding Shri Bhola Nath, He had been heard shouting, 'He is not to be asked to account for anything. Shri Narayan Bhan's bed should be kept ready for him'.

If, after studying all the four Vedas and the shastras, one does not act upon what one has gathered from them, and is bereft of the guru's grace, all one's study only exhausts one and goes waste.

—*Jagadguru Bhagawan Gopi Nath Ji.*

Approaching a Saint

By **Shri Jankinath Koul***

When one embarks on the course of Self-realization, one has to look within with the help of a Saint, a veteran on the path. This is a tedious journey, no doubt, but steady effort pushes one on. Sincerity and perseverance are the essential qualities of an aspirant. The experiences of various aspirants may be different but the goal is the same :

'नृणामेको गम्यस्त्वमपि पयसामर्णव इव'—

'Just as all the different streams mingle with the sea, so, O Lord ! all the different paths lead to Thee.'

The Kashmir Shaiva Philosophy evolving from the 'Agama' and the 'Tantra' shastras, is meant for all those (irrespective of caste, creed or colour) who have a yearning to attain true knowledge and thereby liberation from the cycle of birth and death. The Monistic Shaiva teaching was retaught by Tryambaka, and it got the name Trika. This philosophy has been explained in four systems, namely. 'Krama,' 'Kula,' 'Spanda' and 'Pratyabhijna.'

The 'Krama' system advocates 'Raja 'Yoga;' it explains the 'Kundalini' Yoga It lays stress on the interdependent action of the vital air (praana) and the mind (manas). The perfect control over the mind also means the perfect control over the 'praana.' When the mind is concentrated on the centre of the 'praana' and the 'apaana,' both these automatically cease to function and rush into the central vein (sushumna). Then these go downwards through this vein and, after touching the 'Mooladhaara' 'chakra,' rise in the form of the energy of bliss (Kundalini) towards the 'Sahasraara 'chakra' and the Yogi experiences the consciousness of bliss (chidaananda) and finally is raised to the state of universal consciousness (Jagadaananda).

The 'Kula' system was propounded by Somanatha towards the close of the 5th centuary A.D. It presents the highest thought, which explains the state of the Universal Being (Parama Shiva), of whom the entire Universe is born and into Whom it merges :

यत्रोदितमिदं चित्रं विश्व यत्रास्तमेति च।
तत्कुल विद्धि सर्वज्ञ शिवशक्तिविवर्धितम् ॥

'Spanda,' in its positive approach, is the power of consciousness, which gives life to the senses. In its negative approach, the 'spanda' system lays down that there exists neither pain nor pleasure, nor even the negative of both. Sri Vasugupta charya re-introduced this system in Kashmir in the 8th century A.D. by explaining the 'Siva-sutras'** graced to him by Lord Shiva Himself in a dream. This system had originated from the Ardatryambaka school. *Vijnana Bhatrava Tantra* lays down 112 ways of meditation on the centre of any two movements, mental or physical, by practising which an aspirant can achieve the 'spanda' state. The process is further explained in the *Spanda Shastra.*

The 'Pratyabhijna' system of the Kashmir Shaiva Philosophy was later propounded

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**Shiva-Sutra-Vimarsha : The latest commentary on the Shiva Sutras in simple Hindi by the present writer has been published recently.

by Somaanandanatha in his *Shivadrishti* It was further explained by his disciple, Utpaladeva, in the *Ishwara-Pratyabhjna*. 'Pratyabhijna' is the science of recognition, by which one realises, and re-unites with the original state i e the Universal Consciousness.

Like Vedanta, the Shaiva philosophy endeavours to remove the innate ignorance that separates the individual soul from the Universal Self. The Vedanta philosophy, as advocated in the Upanishads. requires an aspirant to qualify in the four-fold discipline laid down by Adi Shankaracharya. With the passage of time, developed the various systems of this philosophy to suit the various levels of the capacity and intelligence of aspirants. But the Vedanta, as expounded by Shankara, is the most sublime and popular.

The Shaakta cult is quite akin to the Shaiva cult.

In our vast land of various religions and cultures, the Vaishnava faith also has developed different systems. It is for this reason perhaps that a faith, which appears to be polytheistic to non-Hindus, is witnessed among the Hindus. But the final goal is the same and that is the realization of the Self.

Different saints and the followers of different cults among the Hindus have adopted different practices to achieve the same goal. It is these practices that distinguish one saint from another. Each saint has his or her own way of attainment and all are worthy of obeisance. It is the innate tendency of a particular aspirant that guides him to approach a particular Saint who is destined to guide him successfully. It is diffcult to probe into the ways and methods of saints otherwise :—

स्वानन्दे सहजे सदा विचरतां
स्वच्छन्दलीलाजुषां
निस्सगा च निरर्गला च जगतां
कल्याणसंदोहिनी ।
मत्स्यानां सलिलेऽम्बरे च वयसां
वायोरिवाशामुखे
दुर्लक्ष्ये पथि योगिनां बहुविधा
गूढ़ा विचित्रा गतिः ॥

[The courses of Yogis (on the spiritual path) are hidden, diverse and difficult to perceive, just like those of fish in water, birds in the sky and the wind in the quarters. In their sportive enjoyment. they move in the Supreme Spirit, and that has become natural to them. Their movement is untainted and free, showering bliss upon humanity.]

Bhagawan Shri Gopi Nath Ji was a 'jivanmukta'* and has been showering his grace upon his devotees in this manner:

*One who has attained liberation while still in the gross body

COMMENTRY

On Shri Justice S. N. Katju's Review of the biography of Bhagawan Gopi Nath Ji of Kashmir

By **Shri H. N. Koul***

The 'Review' of the biography of Bhagawan Gopi Nath Ji by Shri Justice S. N. Katju which is based on the philosophy of Advaita Shaivism has been communicated to me by the Trust, Kharyar, Srinagar, Kashmir, for replying to the queries made by the author of the 'Review.'

The small pamphlet contains

1) a preface by the Secretary of the Trust ;
2) a copy of a letter dated 6th June, 1975 from Shri Justice Katju to the Secretary of the Trust ;
3) a letter dated 6th July, 1975 from Shri Justice Katju to the late Shri Shridhar Joo Dhar, Retired Conservator of Forests, Kashmir ;
4) a review of the 'Biography' ; and
5 a copy of a letter dated 19th April, 1976 from Shri Justice Katju to Shri Swami Lakshman Joo, who is a leading Shaivite of Kashmir.

In the 'Review' Shri Justice Katju has made the following queries :-

i) Would anyone elucidate comprehensively the Advaita Shaivism of Kashmir or the Trika Darshana, which seems to have been followed by Bhagawan Gopi Nath Ji?
ii) Would someone throw light on the spiritual practices of Bhagawan Gopi Nath Ji in the context of Kashmir Shaivism ?
iii) Would a competent person throw light on the various 'saadhanas' (spiritual practices) prescribed in the Trika Shastra ?

The path followed by Bhagawan Gopi Nath Ji can be explained by his close associates and disciples in the light of his appearance and utterances. It can safely be asserted that he was a Shaivite trying to approach the Universal Entity of the Truth (the Self of all selves) by means of the Universal Consciousness (the Advaita approach). This system is also mentioned in the 'Pratibijna' (Self-recognition) School of Kashmir. According to this School of thought, the individual consciousness has to merge with the Universal Consciousness and thus the Universal Truth is the individual's own Self. This union of the two is Advaita. The tantric methods also conceive the thought as absolute, and combine the senses and the elements that govern the different parts of our body into oneness. They also help to attain worldly power and, ultimately, liberation. This school does not believe in renunciation and the world being merely an illusion. The tantrics are realistic in character and approach.

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*Editor, *Research* (Trika Philosophy and Culture of Kashmir)

The recognition of the Self as the Universal Self is difficult to attain There are, therefore, the various Tantric methods of 'saadhana' to be followed by the common run of people In the 'Review,' the Divine Mother in the forms of Sharika, Rajna and Jwala, is referred to. Sharika symbolizes all the powers of consciousness existing in the Universal Mother, the Universal Mind or the Universal Power. Rajna is a stage where Shiva and Shakti unite. Jwala is a symbol of consciousness as light.

In each case, the Universal Mother Jagad Amba) manifests Herself in a form that can be worshipped. The entire Shaivism is condensed into two terms, Vimarsha' and 'Prakaasha' 'Prakaasha means' the Universal Truth and 'Vimarsha' the consc ousness inheren' in it 'Vimarsha' has given birth to the Universe and ends in Her own form, whereas 'Prakaasha' exists in it without any vibration or action. 'Vimarsha' is merely one of the 'spandas' or vibrations of 'Prakaasha' and thus is not separate from it.

The predominance of 'Vimarsha' or 'Shakti' thought, borrowed by other schools of thought, is easier to canceive for the 'saadhaka,' since the concept of Shiva is very difficult and even an adept may go astray, trying to concentrate on i . The 'Shakt' thought is an easier means to that end. Hence the Advaita system in Trika philosophy appeals to all the schools of the 'Shaaktas' All the 'shaaktas,' therefore, have borr wed the principles of the Trika system, which is termed as the three-fold science of Kashmir, culminating into Oneness. Even the Budhistic school of thought became presentable to China, Jawa Sumatra and Japan in the colour of the Shakti Doctrine. It was popular for centuries among all intellectuals.

In the 'Advaita Shaivism' of Kashmir, different practices are given in different 'tantras'. Roughly speaking, there are a number of 'Prakriyaas,' called the 'saadhanaas' for opening the invisible door of the Universal Consciousness, which is called the 'Jeevan mukhta-avasthaa' and is outside the cycle of birth and death One of these methods seems to have been pursued by Bhagawan Gopi Nath Ji in his efforts to attain the 'Jeewan-mukhta-avasthaa'. We give below a few 'saadhanaas,' which seem to be consistent with his external demeanour and the history of his 'saadhanaa' as given in the booklet.

1. Considering one's existing energy as the light-rays rising from centre to centre in the vertebral column, and thus opening the door of the individual consciousness into the Universal One.
2. Feeling one's individual self existing in the light and effulgence of the Universal Self.
3. Focusing one's energy on light and fire, and thus consuming the consciousness of the individual self.
4. In the objective world, concentrating on the centre of an object with love, and thus removing the obstructions of the physical body in the Universal Form.
5. Feeling one's self as the cosmos,

as the everlasting and undying Self, and regarding one's self as the Universal Cosmos.

6. Regarding space and time as brilliance, and experiencing that the seeker and the sought are one
7. Giving up the attachment to the body and realising the 'I' as the Universal 'I', which is One and Eternal.
8. Feeling one's consciousness as the Universal Consciousness and the knower merging into the known.
9. The 'saadhaka' attains all the powers underlying the creation of the Universe, which are termed as the 'Ashta-Siddhi ' or the power of the Mahaanayaa, i e, the power of creating the Universe with all its forms and phenomena.

There are 'prakriyaas' on sound, breath, the void, space and time, and super-intelligence, which are about a hundred in number. These do not apply in the present context. These also help one in the process of opening the door of the Universal Consciousness, but Bhagawan Ji does not seem to have followed any of these 'prakriyaas' in view of his behaviour and demeanour as presented in the 'Review'. Bhagawan Ji was, no doubt, an adept in the practice enjoined by the Advaita Shaivism of Kashmir, but he seems to have assumed the state of the consciousness which is the consciousness of all forms Such adepts, though in the Universe, are outside it This state is termed as the 'Shaambhavi Avasthaa'. In a different context, it is called the 'Aghora Avasthaa' matter ending in consciousness. In the scientific language, it may be called the anti-matter state of consciousness. Consciousness in matter has three qualities: creation, preservation and dissolution in the cyclic order. By converting the three orders into anti-matter, these are turned into the everlasting state which is always present, and rejects the past and the future. This is the eternal, unborn and undying state. These three powers inherent in consciousness are termed, in the technical language, Brahmaa Vishnu ann Shiva, or the present, the past and the future. This is the 'Aghora Avasthaa.' The three momentary states of consciousness exist in time and space The absolute truth underlying this consciousness is called 'Parama Shiva', Who is the basis of consciousness in the Universe in the cyclic order. The 'spanda' of consciouness is the 'tattvas' The 'spandas,' by permutation and combination, give rise to thirty-six principles to arrange this Universe as it is. The individual consciousness in man is the Jeeva Atma. Atma is the Universal Consciousness and Paramatma is the cause of consciousness. Thus everything ends in Monism or Advaita, that is, oneness or nondualism. 'I' in all the states of existence is none but Parama Shiva. He is free from all action and is pure bliss. His Consciousness is the only cause of the Universe Thus man is God and God is man. In Vedaanta, the truth is expressed as 'So-Aham-So', 'Aham Brahma asmi', 'Sarwam khalu idam Brahama', 'Shivah Aham', 'Kaivalah Aham'.

The Trika philosophy is one of Advaita Shaivism. It stands for the union of the individual consciousness with the Universal

Consciousness, both finally merging in the Absolute Cause, i. e., Parama Shiva. It is a three-fold science. The individual pure intelligence (free from sense vibrations) consumes the level of Universal Intelligence and ultimately turns oneness into the cause of its existence, Parama Shiva. It is the 'Jeeva Atma' becoming 'Atma' which is universal in character, and, finally, getting absorbed in Paramaatmaa. It is Shiva, Shakti, 'Anu'– in a triangular form. This is the Trika Philosophy of Kashmir, which has nourished the culture of the Valley. It preaches oneness, 'Sat-Chit-Anananda'. 'Sat' is 'Parama Shiva', 'Chit' is the Universal Intelligence and 'Aanananda' is Harmony. In the three states of Trika Darshana, 'OM' is the Universal Intelligence, which opens the Universe in all forms, phenomena and elements, and 'Suah' is combining the thirty-one 'tattvas' into one Both these states finally end in Parama Shiva. The Shaivism of Kashmir has its own terminology, which indicates oneness in the Universe. So Man is a part as well as the whole. He is the atom as well as Parama Shiva Himself

Bhakti or Devotion

By **Shri S. N. Zadoo "Suman"***

1 The Vedas are the source of knowledge and the Upanishads contain the general outline of the metaphysics and psychology of Hinduism. Devotion literally means giving up the mind to the worship of God and in the Vedas sixteen thousand 'mantras' are exclusively devoted to devotion. The foremost form of devotion is devotion to duty.

2 Duty denotes what one is morally bound to do. Duty binds together the preceptor and the disciple Unless they merge in cosmic life, their realization of the Atman—the Self - is not complete.

3. In the 'Ramacharitamaanasa,' Goswami Tulsidas says that devotion is nine-fold, its first and foremost aspect being devotion to duty.

4. The 'Saama Veda,' includes the 'Chhandogya Brahmana', consisting of ten parts. Of these, the last eight constitute the 'Chhandogya Upanishad'. The eight parts of the Upanishad are broadly devided into two sections The first, consisting of five parts, deals with 'upaasanaa' or worship with emphasis on meditation. This worship is the way to the knowledge of God.

*477, Jawaharnagar, Srinagar.

5. This Upanishad devotes five of its eight parts to a discussion of the various forms of 'upaasanaa'. According to the 'Panchadashi', 'upasanaa' consists in meditation on the object of worship Worship presupposes a distinction between the worshipper and the object of worship. Above all, worship depends upon faith. Among the three aspects of the Vedas, knowledge and worship are mental activities unlike 'karma' or action. But knowledge results from valid evidence. 'Bhakti' cannot produce knowledge directly; it only purifies the mind.

6. Waking, dreaming and sleep are the three stages which lead us to the true devotion to the Self. Man has to devote his life to the realization of the 'Atman' Which is non-dual and free from time, space and the attributes. To facilitate the comprehension of this concept of an ordinary person, it has been laid down that

i) the 'Atman' dwells in the heart as space with many attributes;
ii there are certain disciplines for attaining the knowledge of the 'Atman'; and
iii) there are gradual stages of realization.

7. In the 'Bhagwadgita,' six chapters out of eighteen have been devoted to 'Bhakti,' and Lord Krishna has time and again stressed devotion for the sake of devotion. The Lord initiated Arjuna in many forms of 'Bhakti' The most vital form that has been explained in the holy book is the 'Nirguna Bhakti' or devotion without any attributes.

8. Our gross bodies depend on the 'Atman'. The 'Atman' gives many indications of protecting our life

9. Shree Surdass has been perhaps the greatest of the saint-poets in Hindi Literature, who have devoted themselves to Shree Krishna exclusively. 'Sura Sagar' is based on 'Shrimad Bhaagavatam' and its predominant sentiment is vaatsalya', which is the best type of devotion and leads to realization.

All that exists is God incarnate (विराट्) and Aum' is its root. 'Aum' pervades everything Nothing is possible without it.

—Jagadguru Bhagawan Gopi Nath Ji

Another Instance of Bhagawan Ji's Compassion

Bhagawan Ji is an ocean of compassion. He gave up the mortal frame about two decades ago but He continues to be as compassionate as ever. In order to guide them in their spiritual quest, He has been making Himself visible in His effulgent astral form before some spiritual aspirants, appearing in their minds during meditation, instructing them in their dreams, or guiding them invisibly.

Most such blessed souls are generally tight lipped about Bhagawan Ji's grace. The few, who are not, include several in our Valley, the rest of the country and abroad, especially in Australia. Ms Yvonne Houley, a young Australian lady, is among the latest recipients of such grace. She speaks about it to Shri Roshan Lal, a member of our Trust, in a letter, which we reproduce below :-

—Editor

Yvonne Houley,
3 Carrington Street,
Balmain, 2041,
Australia, NSW.

13th January, 1987.

Om Roshan Lal,

How are you ? I wish all my brothers and sisters a peaceful New year filled with Bhagawan Ji's blessings. How quickly time passes ! It has been four months since my return from Kashmir, although my memories are fresh in my mind

I have had many many changes in my spiritual since I have returned. It seems Kashmir opened a lot of different levels in my conscousness. Some I was aware of, others not. Bhagawan Ji has been extremely patient with me. I find often my eyes are blind and my ears do not hear his wisdom However, I continue to seek his guidance and I continue my linking meditation often, sometimes thrice a day When I returned to Sydney, I changed jobs and now I do data-entry work at various companies in the city. One company, that I worked at, gave me the opportunity to meet a very spiritually evolved soul. His name is Raymond Gordon and, when I met him, I felt that we had known each other for a few previous lives ; he also felt this. I invited him to my home for meditation and, while we were in meditation, he told me he could see an elderly Indian man with a white turban around his head. He said he was sitting near me and had a smile on his face. He also felt that this guide had an intense energy and was watching him closely. I knew this had to be Bhagawan Ji but I found it incredible that he would present himself to Raymond so soon. After the meditation, I showed to Raymond a picture of the Bhagawan and he agreed that it was the man he had seen. I then spoke to Raymond about Bhagawan Ji and give him a photo to keep in his

room. He has since had further contact with the Bhagawan and continues to keep Him as his guide. We often meditate on the Bhagawan's pure light

The Bhagawan has given me many tests to go through since I've been back. At the moment, my level of consciousness feels the need to get released from the physical boundaries I sit often in meditation to try to attain this level and sometimes I do attain it), but to maintain that state of consciousness is very hard. Last night, Raymond and I went to a Raja Yoga centre and there we had m ditation, which was just focussed on the 'third-eye' area, and shifting out of your body to feel peace and unity with God.

I feel the Bhagawan directed me to that place so that I can learn to attain this level of consciousness; he is always so giving. Some friends of Raymond's are starting a circle of people to meditate, and they have asked me to join them. I will introduce the concept of Bhagawanji consciousness. These people are very spiritual and their only aim is to rise to God-consciousness and spread love, peace and light throughout the World; it is needed so badly.

This year I will not be returni g to Kashmir, as I feel the need to finish my Natural Therapies course, and do much spiritual work here in Sydney. I am making many contacts with people who feel the same. I plan to be in India/ Kashmir next year. I miss my brothers and Sister Dura Ji, and ask that you continue to pray and meditate for me to evolve spiritually. Could you please give my respects and regards to Mr *Potedar?

OM Yvonne

*Shri Shankar Nath Fotedar, the chief disciple of Bhagawan Ji, founder patron of Bhagawan Shri Gopi Nath Ji Trust, and author of Bhagawan Ji's Biobraphy, 'Bhagawan Gopi Nath Ji of Kashmir.' – Editor

Some Hints to 'Saadhakas'

By **Shri R. K. Sapru**

Food :

Spiritual aspirants need to follow the below-mentioned norms with respect to their diet

'Saatvic' eatables like milk, curds, ghee and fruits should be preferred. Meat-eating, where it is unavoidable, as in Kashmir, is not prohibited. But meat-eating out of slavery to the sense of taste or in large quantities should be avoided. Eggs and chicken meat also should be avoided. This is for the beginner but, later on, when maturity comes, one need not be bothered too much about what to eat and what not to eat. This was verily Bhagawan Ji's attitude to eatables. Natural vegetarians are welcome but a vegetarian need not hate, or be repelled by a non-vegetarian and his diet. A true yogi is above attraction and repulsion. A light stomach is conducive to deep meditation. Unless one has transceded the effects of the 'gunas', as Bhagwan Ji had, the use of stimulants and intoxicants should be avoided as far as possible. 'Saadhakas' should offer every morsel of the food they take to the Lord or to their respective gurus.

The day's activities :

Bhagawan Ji, like all other saints, was an early riser. Early rising and the practice of 'Japa[1],' meditation, 'kirtana[2]' etc. are advisable in the case of all devotees.

A 'saadhaka' should avoid overwork everywhere ; e. g. in the office and at home. Overwork makes the mind unfit for meditation. During work, he should maintain his self-consciousness, and not get entirely lost in any work to the point of self-forgetfulness, which is against yogic discipline. But worklessness due to lethargy etc. also is not advisable. Moderate selfless work and charity are quite helpful in the spiritual field.

Marriage and Sex :

Bhagawan Ji's point of view on this issue is quite clear. Whether to be a celibate or a married person is not for the individual surface mind to decide No mood of the moment is a guide to decide about it. It is the innate nature of 'swadharma' or the 'gunas' that the Lord has assigned to you, which is the deciding factor. In a majority of cases the sex-instinct is very strong and they should act according to their natures, and not suppress them. If they excercise some kind of unnatural suppression, they will put themselves and the society to harm. The following instructions are necessary in this regard :—

i) Since the flow of 'praana' the vital air, during sex is downwards as against that in spiritual contemplation—when it is upwards - one should be very moderate in sex-indulgence, and the greatest possible economy in the waste of the vital fluid is the rule of the yogis.

ii) An optimum quantity of the seminal fluid should be stored in the body to

1) Repeating a 'mantra' or a sacred formula.
2) Singing devotional songs.

help in concentration and meditation, and for its transformation into spiritual energy or the 'ojas' in the brain.

iii) When passions trouble one too much, one should fast for a day, or forego a meal.

iv) Wet dreams need not discourage a 'saadhaka'. The elimination of the vital fluid in this manner is gradual, as it depends on the intake of food and the purity of the mind. With gradual spiritual development, the passage of time and the advancemet of age, sex—nature is naturally and harmoniously transcended.

Association and Friendship :

An aspirant should cultivate friendship and association with noble minded and righteous people. The companionship of 'saadhakas,' devotees, the learned and those who are more advanced than you in the spiritual field is most welcome and a result of good luck. Too much talking is detrimental ; one must talk only about what is most essential and unavoidable One should not enter into fruitless argumentation and controversies, which may upset one's mind.

Meditation and its technique :

Before dealing with the subject, it is essential to say something about the constitution of the individual soul and the Universal Soul, called the Divine Mother. The individual soul has five sheaths or coverings :

i) The Material Sheath (The Annamaya Kosha)

ii) The Breath Sheath (The Praanamaya Kosha)

iii) The Mental Sheath (The manomaya Kosha)

iv) The Intellectual Sheath (The Vijnaanamaya Kosha)

v) The Blissful Sheath (The Anandamaya Kosha)

Within these sheaths, which are collectively called 'prakriti' or its products, is the luminous 'Atman' or the individual soul, also called the 'Purusha' Practically, as a result of our experience, we can say that man has three bodies ; namely,

i) The material body : - Which we all see. The yogis ascribe the red colour to it.

ii) The astral body :— Experienced in dreams and which departs at death. Its colour is white,

iii) The causal body :— Composed of the mind, the intellect, the ego and the impressions of the various births. It is a collection of ideas in motion and devoid of any colour. Hence the black colour is ascribed to it.

The Soul or the 'Atman' is pure consciousness and is an immortal spark of the greater sun of consciousness, called the 'Paramaatman'.

Beyond these three sheaths and the corresponding 'lokas' or planes of existence, stand the spiritual planes. In the body, the heart is the dwelling place of the individual soul, as it stands now Thus, man naturally, when referring to himself, keeps his hand on, or near the heart. The soul has to ascend to the higher spiritual planes, which correspond to the centre at the 'brikutee' or the place between the

eye - brows, and to the centre at the crown of the head, called the 'sahasraara' or the thousand-petalled lotus. These centres correspond to the location of the 'tilak'[1] and the 'bodhi'[2]. The crown of the head is the centre of the cosmic consciousness or the Bhagawan consciousness. It corresponds to the dwelling place of the 'Sat-Chit-Ananda Rupini' Mother, Whose nature is the pure Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. Some may call it the place of Lord Shiva, since the Two are never separate. Bhagawan ji once revealed that his habitat or dwelling place is above the 'Brahmaanda' or the crown of the head, which corresponds to the region of the Formless, Indescribable and Un-manifest Reality, called 'Ayukta'. Thus, when someone refers to God, he naturally points upwards. Bhagawan ji, though stationed at, or identified with the Formless Reality called 'Parama Shiva' or 'Param Brahma', has access to any realm of the manifest existence like the 'Manushya Loka', the 'Deva Loka', the 'Hiranya Loka', the 'Tapo Loka', the 'Sat Loka', the 'Brahma Loka', and the like. And he appears to guide the souls on different planes and thus performs a cosmic role out of sheer compassion.

'Japa' and meditation :—

For one who is under the tyranny and control of the mind and its moods, the aim is to silence it or at least to have a thorough control over it, in order to transcend it. One may go in for 'Bhakti Yoga', 'Jnaana Yoga' and 'Karma Yoga' simultaneously, in order to reduce the restlessness of the mind and eventually to transcend it. Since man naturally has the head, the heart and the four limbs, the heart should develop true devotion, the head, true knowledge to support that devotion and the four limbs should translate true devotion and knowledge into selfless action. In the 'Kaliyuga' or the Iron Age, the practice of mental or verbal 'japa' is strongly recommended and much beneficial; since we think, and do all worldly transactions by speech or sounds, sound plays a vital role in our lives. One should practise the 'japa' of 'OM', or the Guru's name or the name of his Ishta-Deva[3] or Devi. This is better done mentally throughout the day whenever the circumstances allow, till the 'mantra' settles in the sub-conscious mind; then, even during sleep, the mind will engage itself in 'japa'. Where true 'jnaana' or knowledge exists, true 'Bhakti' also exists, and where true 'Bhakti[4]' exists, 'nishkaama Karma'[5], too, exists.

Concentration :

Bhagawan Ji once remarked, 'My own Self or the "Gita" is my Guru'. 'Shrimad-bhagawadgita' is a book for yogis and this remark has that implication. Thus, in agreement with the 'Gita' and

1. The vermilion, saffron or sandal mark between a Hindu's eye-brows.
2. The tuft of hair on a Hindu's head.
3. The chosen deity.
4. Devotion.
5. Selfless action.

the 'Sahaja Yoga' of the 'Santamata', Bhagawan Ji recommends concentration at 'Bhroomadhya' or the 'Aajna Chakra' or the third eye, the place of the 'tilak'. But those who feel naturally drawn to concentration at the heart centre or 'Anaahata Chakra', should go in for it. They will be naturally led upwards—owing to the upward flow of the force of 'praana', the nerve currents and the breath—to the 'Brikutee' and the 'Sahasraara'. This process is mentioned in the 'Dakshinaa Murti Arti' (Song Service) which is repeated daily at the Ashram.

Deliberate concentration on the 'Mulaadhaara,' the 'Swadishthaana', the 'Manipura' and the 'Vishuddha Chakra' (all energy - centres in the subtle body), is forbidden, as it may awaken the serpent power or the 'Kundalini Shakti' coiled below the 'Moolaadhaara Chakra' corresponding to the base of the spinal column in the body. Deliberate awakening of the 'Kundalini' is to be avoided because of the following reasons :—

1 A restricted diet and strict 'brahmacharya' (celibacy) are essential for it, which is not possible for a householder.

2. The constant companionship of the guru and his physical presence is essential for it.

3. It disturbs the whole metabolic system, upsets the normal psychological make-up, opens up new frontiers of the mind and bestowes occult powers, to receive which an unguided 'saadhaka' may not be fit.

Bhagawanji's method consists of awakening and activising all the seven 'chakras' (energy centres) in the astral body by the descent of power from above the head. Bhagawan Ji may activate the 'chakras' and even cause the safe ascent of the 'Kundalini' without any disturbance, by his mere will, touch, gaze or entrance into the subtle body of the aspirant during evening prayers or at any other time, as has happened in the case of Mr Philip Simpfendorfer of Australia and many others. This is the significance of the part of the daily evening 'Arti' at the Ashram in the ascent of the 'Kundalini'.

One may concentrate on the face of the Divine Mother or of one's guru in a picture by constantly gazing at it. This is called 'Traataka' but it should not be prolonged too much so as to cause an undue strain on the eyes. One can close the eyes and direct one's attention to the mental picture of the guru or the 'Ishtadeva' between the eye—brows. For all this, one's own internal nature or urge is the best guide, i. e., one must do what comes naturally to one. During meditation one may feel involuntary jerks, but one should not resist them. This is because the 'praanic' force is finding its passage through one of the 72,000 'nadis' in the astral body (the 'sookshma Sharira') and that causes the corresponding muscular movement in the body. There may be a shivering of the body or an involuntary rhythmic motion of the whole body or of a part of it. This is an interaction of

1. The particular form of God, who is one's ideal deity.
2. Devotion.
3. Selfless action.

the astral body on the material body and 'vice versa'. It is all a process of cleaning the 'naadis' in the astral body, and the nerves and the veins in the material body, to allow the 'praanic' force to flow freely. These symptoms, however, pass off after some time. Secondly, during meditation, one may feel a swinging motion of the astral, and hence of the material body. One should not resist it or feel disturbed about it. This way the subtle body is trying to loosen itself and thus dissociate temporarily from the gross body and assert its independent existence. Bhagawan Ji would use this invisible body to visit some far-off places.

Deliberate 'kumbhaka' or the retention of the breath should be avoided as far as possible. But the spontaneous 'kumbhaka' is welcome at the different 'chakras', though it should not last long.

Thirdly, during intense meditation on the 'Brikuti' or the 'Sahasraara', the breath will levitate upwards and find a channel for upward motion to the 'Brahmaanda'. The ascent should be made gradually till the nerve-passages are cleaned in the material body and hence the 'naadis', too, in the subtle body. There may be perspiration on the fore-head, but there is nothing to be worried about in this. However, extreme stress and strain should be avoided. The great yogini, Lal-Ded, also speaks of the motion of the 'praana' to the 'Brahmaanda', resulting in the conquest of the mind and hence of death.

By constant practice, a time will come when, owing to perfect concentration, the nervous system in the material body and the 'naadis' in the astral body will get cleaned and the passage of 'praana', or the life-force, will be free to rise to the 'Brikuti' or the 'Ajna Chakra', the 'Lalana Chakra', situated just above the 'Ajna Chakra', and then to the 'Sahsraara' at the crown of the head, the abode of Shiva.

The concentration on the 'Brikuti' results in the burning of all past 'samskaaras'* and so in the liberation from the clutches of the mind. This happens when one enters into perfect 'samaadhi' with the whole life-force drawn up, resulting in the numbness of the body upto the neck. Similarly, during the concentration at the 'Sahasraara', or the crown of the head, heat is sometimes generated. Then cold water should be poured on the head to normalize the temperature. When this concentration matures and all 'praanic' force moves up, one enters the 'samaadhi', or the super-conscious state.

It is essential to mention for the help and knowledge of 'saadhakas' that during the ascent from the heart-centre to the third-eye centre, peculiar involuntary movements may take place in the neck. One should not resist them. This happens because the nerves and the 'naadis' need to open up their passages by 'mudras' and allow the 'Praana' to go up.

Astral lights appearing before the mind's eye is another sign. They are simply an encouragement to the 'saadhaka'

*Subtle impressions, mostly from the previous incarnations.

and need not be taken seriously. The following ten sounds may be heard during the ascent to the 'Sahasraara' and these correspond to the different spiritual stages : 1. Chini 2. 'Chini-Chini' or the chirping of birds. 3. The bell sound 4. The conch-shell sound 5. The lute or 'veena' sound. 6. The cymbal sound. 7. The flute sound. 8. The drum sound. 9. The double drum sound. 10. The sound of the thunder. The primal sound, 'OM', may also be heard.

All these sounds are universal and spontaneous, and Bhagawanji must have heard these, this path being universal and each soul being bound to pass through these phases. The Hindus imitate all these sounds in their temples.

I have heard some people say that Bhagawanji's path was very obscure and unknown. I don't subscribe to this view. Paths can vary; methods and techniques can vary, too, so long as man is below the 'Ajna Chakra', but beyond that, the path is not individual but universal, and it was, is and will be the same for all true seekers

To very advanced 'saadhakas' above-the-head meditation is recommended.

"Let all true knowledge grow and not perish, for the help and guidance of all sincere seekers and let the benevolence of the Master be on all of us."

The Guru is Brahmaa (the Creator), Vishnu (the Presever), and Shiva (the Destroyer). He is the Universe itself and so must be worshipped (61).

Without the Guru's grace, it is difficult for the disciple to keep his mind at rest, even though he may study any number of shastras (123).

—*The Guru Geetaa*

The Secretary's Report

During the period under report (i. e. since the last issue of our journal appeared), the following were the main activities of the Trust :—

a) Discourses on the following spiritual subjects were organised :—

i) On *Bhaktiyoga*, delivered by Swami Chidatmananda Ji of Shri Ramakrishna Mission, Hyderabad.

ii) On *Guru Bhakti*, delivered by Shri Moti Lal Ji Brahmachari,

iii) On *the Gayatri Mantra*, delivered by Shri Swami Swayam Anand Ji

iv) On *Tantra*, delivered by Shri Ghulam Rassool Santosh,

v) On *Guru Mahimaa*, delivered by Shri Pushkar Nath Kaul 'Poshi Mot.'

b) The Ashram—compound was fenced with wire net. This satisfied a long-felt and pressing need, as there was a danger of some accident taking place when large numbers of people assembled in the open compound to celebrate the two main annual functions. [The Ashram does not have enough accommodation and efforts are on to make as much addition to it as possible.]

c) Financial assistance continued to be given to destitute persons, mostly widows. This assistance was raised to Rs 70,00 per month per destitute this year. Besides, financial assistance was given to some patients badly in need of such help ; e. g, those needing a kidney—transplant. In the current year's budget a provision of over Rs 45,000 has been made for help to the destitute, the ailing and the talented but poor students.

d) The two main annual functions continued to be held ; at the conclusion of the annual *mahaayajna* (performed on the day of Bhagawanji's giving up the gross body) over a thousand devotees partook of the *prashaad*; On the *mahaajayanti* day, besides *paadukaa—poojan* and the recitation of the *Guru Geeta* , large numbers of *saadhus* were offered food and *dakshinaa*; also, many devotees partook of the *prashaad*. On the first Sunday of every month, *japa—homa* was performed about an hour before the daily evening *aarati* (song service) offered to Bhagawan Ji, in Whose honour a *smriti divas* (day of remembrance) was also held every year on the 25th of December. The *Guru Poornima* day on *Aashaadha Poornima* (The full—moon day in the month of *Aashaadha*) was duly celebrated every year. Night *kirtan* (singing devotional songs throughout the night) was held on every *Hora Ashtami*.

On 19th July this year, elections were held to fill some vacancies in the Board of Trustees and the Managing Committe, Shri Makhan Lal Pandita and Shri Pran Nath Kaul were elected unanimously President and Secretary respectively Prof B. N. Parimoo and Major Radha Krishen Raina (Retd.) were elected members of the Trust. The Board of Trustees expressed their appreciation of the right guidance provided, nd the constructive work done by Prof. J. N. Sharma, the out—going President, during his tenure. They were glad that, his services would continue to be available to the Ashram

Three young persons—Km Indra Patwari, Shri Susheel Raina and Shri Ramesh—were elected to the Managing Committee.

We express our gratitude to Shri S. K Koul, Ex-M L A Dr K. L. Choudhary, Physician Specialist, and Prof K. L. Thussu for their co-operation in our gigantic task.

In the service of Shri Bhagawanji,

PRAN NATH KAUL

गुरु-लीला

(लेखक—श्री पुष्करनाथ कौल, "पोशिमोत")

गुरु-दीव लगयो म्य छे चान्य लादन,
पादन वन्दयो मन तय प्राण।
च़य म्योन नख-डोख, च़य तरण-तारण,
पादन वन्दयो मन तय प्राण॥

कर स्वीकार म्यान्य भावकि पम्पोश,
फुलनस आय यिम, चोनुय छु जोश।
होश दिथ म्य पननुय बुथ नोवरावन,
पादन वन्दयो मन तय प्राण॥

सथगुर आसवुन च़ त्रिभुवनसारय,
च़य मोलमाज म्योन ज़ाज़कारय।
करतम वाद पूर; कन थव म्य नादन,
पादन वन्दयो मन तय प्राण॥

गुट च़य कासतम, मत दशिरावतम,
करतम लटलठ त अतगथ दूर।
पनज़े कृपायि सूत्य च़ठ म्य क्रूड़ज़ालन,
पादन वन्दयो मन तय प्राण॥

प्योमुत पथर छुस वति प्यठ अनज़ान,
कर क्या च़यय रोस्त? वथ म्य हावतम।
योतनय आर म्योन; पिल कोत ब खातन?
पादन वन्दयो मन तय प्राण॥

पुशिरोवमुत छुम पान चान्यन चरणन,
कासतम कालहन, दिथ पनव ज़ान।
दूर मत त्रावतम बोज़ कुनि सातन,
पादन वन्दयो मन तय प्राण ।।

विद्याघन छुख ज्ञानुक भण्डार,
निर्-अक्षर छुस, दिम पनुन प्रसाद।
सूत्य सूत्य रोज़तम बिज़ि विज़ि सातन,
पादन वन्दयो मन तय प्राण ।।

नाव चोन वन क्या ? लछिनोव चय छुख,
शुरि त बाच् छी वनान भगवान्जी।
पोशिमोत मन मंज़ि गोरवाक्य पालन,
पादन वन्दयो मन तय प्राण ।।

If (somehow) Shiva (God) gets angry with the disciple, his protector is the Guru, but not even Shiva will protect him against the Guru's anger. Hence, the disciple must make all - out efforts to take refuge in the Guru (52)

Through devotion to the Guru, a disciple can attain liberation (even) without acquiring knowledge. Since nothing is as great as the Guru, the disciple should devotedly propitiate Him in the proper manner. (99)

—*The Guru Geeta*

OUR PUBLICATIONS

1.	**Bhagawan Gopi Nath Ji of Kashmir** (a biography in English) by Shri S. N. Fotedar.	Indian- (Subsidized) Rs. 5.00 Foreign—$ 2 (U S)
2.	**Bhagawan Gopi Nath Ji of Kashmir** (a Hindi translation (by Shri Ramadatta Shukla) Edited by Shri Justice S. N. Katju.	Indian—(Subsidized Rs. 5.00 Foreign—$ 2 (U S)
3.	**Review on 'Bhagawan Gopi Nath Ji of Kashmir'** by Shri Justice S. N. Katju and his letters expounding Shiva - Shakti philosophy (English)	Indian—Re. 1.00 Foreign- 40 cents (U S)
4	**Souvenir in the sacred memory of Bhagawan Shri Gopi Nath Ji (English)** Edited by Shri K. Nanda and Shri R. C. Shivpuri.	Indian—Rs. 10.00 Foreign—$ 4 (U S)
5.	**Bhagawan Gopi Nath Ji, the Saint of All Time (English)** by Prof. K. N. Dhar.	Indian - Rs 20.00 Foreign - $ 8 (U S)
6.	श्रीमद्भगवद्गोपीनाथस्याष्टोत्तरशतनाम स्तोत्रम्	Re. 1.00
7.	**The Guru Geeta (Sanskrit)** with an English translation by Prof J. N. Sharma.	Indian—(Subsidized) Rs. 5.00 Foreign—$ 2 (U S)
8.	**The Guru Geeta (Sanskrit)** with a Hindi explanation by Shri Prem Nath Handoo Shastri. Edited by Shri T. N. Bhat Shastri.	Rs. 8.00
9.	**Memento** (English and Hindi)	Indian - Rs. 5.00 Foreign - $ 2 (U S)
10.	**Geetanjali** (Hindi) Revised by Prof. C. L. Sapru	Indian—Re. 1.00 Foreign - 40 cents (U S)
11.	**Saandhya Vandanaa** (Hindi)	Indian—Rs 1.50 Foreign—60 cents (U S)
12.	**Kumbha Camp Patraavali** (Hindi)	Indian—Re. 1.00 Foreign- 40 cents (U S)
13.	**Maagha Camp Patraavali** (Hindi)	Indian—Re 1.00 Foreign- 40 cents (U S)